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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7255

INFO RUEHZO/AFRICAN UNION COLLECTIVE PRIORITY

RUEHZK/ECOWAS COLLECTIVE PRIORITY

RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY 0579

RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY 0466

RUEHRO/AMEMBASSY ROME PRIORITY 0439

RUEHOS/AMCONSUL LAGOS PRIORITY 2123

RHMFSS/HQ USAFRICOM STUTTGART GE PRIORITY

RHEBAAA/DEPT OF ENERGY WASHDC PRIORITY

RHEHNSC/NSC WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY

RUEAAIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY

RUEKDIA/DIA WASHDC PRIORITY

RHMFSS/HQ USEUCOM VAIHINGEN GE PRIORITY

RUZEJAA/JAC MOLESWORTH RAF MOLESWORTH UK PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ABUJA 001903

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR AF/FO, AF/W, AF/RSA, DRL, INR/AA, INL/AAE

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TAGS: [GV](#) [NI](#) [PGOV](#) [PINR](#) [PREL](#)

SUBJECT: ECOWAS ISSUES COMMUNIQUE ON GUINEA AND NIGER;

TANDJA REFUSES TO GIVE IN

REF: ABUJA 01871 AND PREVIOUS

Classified By: Political Counselor James P. McAnulty
for reasons in Sections 1.4 (B) and (D)

SUMMARY

¶1. (C) Heads of State from the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) called for the UN Secretary General (UNSG) and African Union (AU) to create a Commission of Inquiry to investigate the "mass violation of human rights and humanitarian law in Guinea" and implement an arms embargo. It also announced it will refuse to support candidates from Niger for international posts and has threatened further sanctions if Niger President Tandja fails to suspend the October 20 legislative elections. Tandja's refusal to negotiate with UN Assistant Secretary Menkerios on October 18 will likely lead to Niger's suspension from ECOWAS. END SUMMARY.

YAR'ADUA: STOP THE KILLINGS

¶2. (SBU)On October 17, Nigeria President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua opened the 37th Extraordinary Summit of ECOWAS Heads of State and Government Meeting with a call that member nations not let "the deteriorating political security and human rights condition in Guinea and the constitutional crisis in Niger" grow any worse. He remarked that the "lingering and seemingly intractable crisis" required "appropriate intervention to arrest the drift." Specifically on Guinea, Yar'Adua demanded, "all steps must be taken immediately to stop the killings of innocent Guineans and to implement the agreed upon democratic transition." On Niger, he called the events "a grave threat to the peace and security of the region."

Participants

¶3. (U) Participants included Benin President Dr. Thomas Boni Yayi, Burkina Faso President Blaise Compaore, Guinea Bissau

President Malam Bacai Sanha, Liberia President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, Nigeria President Yar'Adua, Sierra Leone President Ernest Bai Koroma, Togolese President Faure Essozimna Gnassingbe, Gambian Vice President Aja Dr. Isatou Njie Saidy, Ghana Foreign Affairs Minister Alhaji Muhammad Mumuni, Cote d'Ivoire Ambassador to Nigeria Amidou Diarra, Cape Verde Foreign Affairs Secretary of State Jorge Borges, Mali Ambassador to Nigeria Boubacar Coulibaly, Senegal Foreign Minister Madicke Niang, AU Commission Chairman Jean Ping, and UNSG West Africa Special Representative Said Djinnit. Niger did not send a representative; Guinea remains suspended.

ECOWAS REBUFFS TANJA BY INVITING OUSMANE

¶ 14. (C) ECOWAS Parliament Speaker Mahamane Ousmane, who leads the opposition in Niger, attended the closed-door session. He previously told a Canadian diplomat that he would attend only if invited by the ECOWAS commission. ECOWAS placed his seat directly behind the seat for Niger's head of state. Because Ousmane and his Democratic and Social Convention-Rahama (CDS) Party demanded in June 2009 that Niger President Tandja QParty demanded in June 2009 that Niger President Tandja Mamadou step down, several diplomats told PolMiloff that his invitation most certainly represented a deliberate rebuke by ECOWAS President Chambas against Tandja. Chambas previously told PolCouns and PolMiloff during an October 4 meeting that Tandja had perpetrated a "de facto constitutional coup d'etat," which if tolerated would set a dangerous precedent within the region.

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COMMUNIQUE

¶ 15. (U) In the final communique, ECOWAS Heads of State expressed deep concern over the "mass violation of human rights and humanitarian law in Guinea." They called on Burkina Faso President Blaise Campaore to "take all appropriate steps to reestablish dialogue" to form a new transitional authority and ensure no National Convention of Democracy and Development (CNDD) party member stood in the upcoming elections. Heads of State directed the ECOWAS Commission to work with the UNSG and AU to establish a Commission of Inquiry, an accompanying "security cover" for the Commission, and an arms embargo on Guinea. ECOWAS sanctioned Niger by saying it would refuse to support Niger candidates for international posts and threatened further sanctions if Niger President Tandja failed to suspend the October 20 legislative elections and enter into dialogue with an ECOWAS high-level mission to Niger on October 18.

POST-MEETING NEGOTIATIONS

¶ 16. (C) ECOWAS President Mohamed Ibn Chambas told the Ambassador on October 19 that the visit by UN Assistant Secretary General Haile Menkerios, Liberian President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, and former GON President Abdulsalmi Abubukar with President Tandja Mamadou on October 18 "did not prove fruitful." Tandja told Menkerios that he would hold elections on October 20 despite the ECOWAS communique. Abubukar will return for more dialogue, remarked Chambas, but "ECOWAS will have no choice but to expel Niger now."

¶ 17. (C) On Guinea, Menkerios and a UN Human Rights Commissioner's representative have departed for Conakry to meet with junta leader Dadis Camara, the Guinean Bar Association, and opposition leaders. Chambas stated that Menkerios will seek assurances from Camara that the GOG will grant the UN Commission of Inquiry full access to the

country, guarantee the safety and security of its members, and not intimidate any witnesses.

Yar'Adua Health Watch

18. (C) President Yar'Adua spoke clearly and deliberately throughout his ten-minute opening speech, despite appearing disoriented at first. An army aide helped him reshuffle pages of his written speech prior to reading them out loud. The President required assistance while sitting down and standing up. He appeared to be more fragile than when we last saw him, during the Secretary's visit to Abuja in August.

Comment

19. (C) The failure to suspend Niger from ECOWAS surprised many diplomats after the meeting, who speculated that French dependence on Niger uranium sources might have influenced francophone heads of state to moderate sanctions imposed on Niger.

SANDERS